

# Round The MULBERRY BUSH



# Round the Mulberry Bush

By

Marion L. McNeil

Illustrated by

Fern Bisel Peat

Little Ann and Jean are sitting with Grandmother in the apple orchard watching the construction of their new playhouse. The sight inspires Grandmother to tell about the playhouse she and her sisters had "down beside the mulberry bush."

Several days later, after the children are "settled" in their new home, Grandmother comes visiting and tells the first of a series of stories about her own youth. Her playhouse had been named Chickadee's Nest — and what fine times they had all had keeping it spick and span. Once they were brave enough to sleep there all night!

Eight full-page color illustrations by Fern Bisel Peat show the little housekeepers busily engaged at making beds, potting geraniums, and carrying on other playhouse chores.

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By MARION L. McNEIL

Illustrated by FERN BISEL PEAT



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# The New Playhouse

WHEN I was a little girl, my father built a playhouse for my two sisters and me. It was very much like the one your daddy is building for you," said Grandmother Myers to Jean, who held her right hand, and to smaller Ann, who held her left hand.

"Tell us about it," Ann cried. "Tell us a story, grandmother, please."

"This evening, right after dinner, you shall have the story," promised grandmother. "But now we must see how the work is getting along on your playhouse since we were there yesterday."

The three walked down the short driveway past the barn and through the apple orchard until they reached the fence. There in the far corner of the orchard, under an old tree, stood the playhouse.

"It's almost finished, isn't it?" asked Jean, running all around the house to see it from every side.

"My, my," exclaimed grandmother, smiling at her two little granddaughters, "what good times you will have here!"

Two days later daddy told mother the little house in the orchard was ready, and all day long Jean and Ann pulled their wagon filled with rugs, curtains, china, pots and pans, from the big house where they lived into the little house where they would play. Elsie and Brother Ned helped to put the place in order. All four worked hard, and when grandmother came through the orchard about four o'clock that afternoon, she found the two little girls waiting for her. After the house had been inspected and each thing in it duly admired, they sat down on the porch to rest and talk.

"Oh, grandmother, you never told us about the playhouse your daddy made for you," reminded Jean.



"I declare I didn't!" she agreed. "You didn't ask for it the night I had promised it, and I thought it would be a good plan to save it until I came to make my first call after you had moved in and were really and truly at home in yours. I have watched you working all day long, and knew you would be ready to rest and listen.

"Harriet and Jane were my sisters, and they were both older than I, but we always played together, just as you two girls do now. Down in the big garden beside the mulberry bush was a big tool-shed and workshop which my father fixed over into a playhouse for us. He cut two large windows in the walls, and put up a small coal stove, for there was a chimney already built.

"Mother gave us some old furniture and some dishes to put in our house. When the three of us, Harriet and Jane and myself, had our house all in order, mother told us we must divide the housework among ourselves and learn to keep our playhouse just as neat as she kept her house.

" 'Since Harriet is the oldest, I think she ought to be the house-keeper and Carey and Jane be her helpers,' said mother.

"While we were making a list of all the things to be done in Chickadee's Nest——"

"Please 'scuse me," interrupted Jean. "What was Chickadee's Nest?"

"We called our playhouse Chickadee's Nest because father always had called us girls his chickadees. But, as I was saying, before we finished the list, Mary and Martha Newton, the twins next door, came in.

" 'May we play with you?' Mary asked.

" 'Of course, if you will help us keep house,' Harriet replied.

" 'Let's begin work tomorrow,' Jane suggested.

"So the next morning, as soon as we had eaten our breakfast, my





sisters and I went to the Chickadee's Nest and there we found Mary and Martha waiting for us. Harriet took down the work list which she had pinned on the wall the day before and looked at it.

" 'I appoint Carey to do the housework this morning, and first she will sweep the floor. Oh, yes,' she added, 'Martha, you'd better dust a bit when Carey is through sweeping.'

"I was delighted to be the very first one to work in our playhouse, and ran to the closet by the kitchen door and took out the broom. I remember I swept the floor so briskly and swung the broom so high that I swept a picture off the wall."

" 'Oh, oh!' protested Jane, running to pick it up. 'You will break something! Let me sweep!'

" 'No, Janey,' Harriet said, seeing tears come into my eyes. 'Mother said we should learn to do housework, and this is Carey's first lesson in sweeping.'

"I nodded my head, and again began swinging the broom. This time I swept so carefully that Jane smiled and told me I could sweep the pansy bed, I'd become so gentle with the broom."

"Did you?" asked Ann.

"Not then, because everyone laughed at the suggestion. But early one morning I did go to the garden to dust the hollyhocks, and found it much harder than dusting furniture. The leaves broke, and the blossoms fell off so that when mother saw them she wondered if our collie had been snapping at her favorite flowers."

# Clean Clothes

THE following day," continued grandmother, "after the Chickadee's Nest had been swept and dusted, we all sat down on the front porch. Harriet sat on the top step, Mary and Martha were side by side on the next one, Jane sat on the one below, and I was on the very bottom one.

" 'I don't think there is very much work to be done in our house,' commented Jane, smoothing her apron the way our mother often did.

" 'That's because we are all girls,' explained Mary. 'Mother says the boys bring in most of the dirt in our house and it keeps her busy cleaning up after them.'

" 'But isn't there *anything* we can do?' I asked.

" 'Let's play a game, to help us decide,' suggested Harriet. 'This will be a thinking game. Everyone close your eyes,' and so Jane, Mary and Martha put their heads down on their arms, while I put one finger over each eye. 'Now think real hard, everyone. The first who thinks of something to do will say, *I've got it!* and we will give her a prize.'

" 'We were very quiet for several minutes, and I was growing sleepy when Jane exclaimed, 'I've got it! Let's wash our doll clothes and then iron them. It's fun to putter around in the water. Mother will give us a light iron to heat if we ask her.'

" 'That's good!' we all agreed.

" 'So all five of us ran home to gather up our doll clothes. Such a scurrying and a hurrying when we returned! Harriet built a fire in the stove. Martha went to the well for water. Jane stretched a clothesline between the mulberry tree and a corner of Chickadee's Nest. I got an iron from mother. And Mary sorted the clothes, fetched a tub and a large pan in which to wash the clothes.





"When the water was hot, Harriet poured some in the tub, and then brought cold water until it was just right for washing. Jane had her turn first. Each one of us was so anxious to wash that we stood watching her until she rinsed her last piece. Then while she hung her washing on the line, Mary washed, and by the time each of us had our turn at the tub, it was noon and our mothers called us for lunch.

"When we returned, most of the clothes were dry, so we sprinkled them, rolled them in neat damp bundles, and packed them into a small clothes basket. In those days there was no such thing as an electric iron, so we put the iron on the stove to heat. When it was hot enough, Harriet put the ironing board between two chairs and began to iron. My! how I wanted to iron, too!"

"Couldn't you, grandmother?" asked Ann.

"Not then. Mother had told us at noon that Harriet and Martha should do the ironing for all of us, because we younger girls might burn ourselves or scorch the clothes. But we soon found a number of other things to keep us busy. Harriet found a button off one of the dresses and so Jane decided she would mend. I helped Mary take down the clothesline, roll it in a ball, and put it away with the basket and the clothespins."

"You haven't told us about the prize you gave Jane," said Jean.

"That's so—and it was such a very nice prize, too. You could never guess it," replied grandmother.

"Was it a play telephone you could really talk through?" asked Ann, who wanted one very much.

"Dear me, Ann, we didn't have such toys when grandmother was a little girl! No; Harriet found a wide-striped ribbon of pink, white and blue, and presented it to Jane for a hair ribbon."

# A Birthday Gift

ANN and Jean were dressed in their very best, and Ned was wearing his new suit—they looked very much as if they were going to a party. They thought it was nicer than that, for they were going to *give* a party. It was Jean's birthday, and sixteen girls and boys had been invited to come to play. Of course there was to be a cake with nine candles on it, and chocolate ice cream, and candy and other good things to eat.

Just now Ann and Ned were watching Jean unwrap some presents from father, mother and grandmother. First she untied a big oblong box and found a small wardrobe trunk. And when she opened the trunk itself, there was a blue-eyed doll with two dresses, a hat, a coat and a pair of shoes to fit her. In her excitement, she would have forgotten to open the other packages if Ned, who didn't care about dolls, had not reminded her.

"Books!" guessed Jean as she lifted the next package, which was heavier but not quite so big. And so it proved. Handkerchiefs and two games were added to the growing pile of birthday gifts, when her father exclaimed, "Goodness, I nearly forgot an interesting package for my nine-year-old! Ned, get the box in my coat pocket, and give it to Jean."

Ned ran to the hall closet, and when Jean opened the box he brought, she gave a surprised little scream. "Oh, look, it's a bird—it's a canary!"

"It's alive!" cried Ann.

"No, it isn't," Ned said. "It's stuffed."

Jean picked it up and said, "Yes, it is," as she found the short metal pipe that convinced her it was so.

"Bring me a glass of water, Ann," said father, "and I'll show you how Jean's canary can sing."

He unscrewed the little pipe, poured some water in a little hole in

the bird, and screwed in the pipe. "Now blow through the pipe like you blow on a whistle. Not too hard!" he warned as Jean took a deep breath.

As she blew into the pipe, the canary opened its mouth and twittered, "Tweet, twit-tweet, tweet!"

"Let me blow," begged Ann. So Ann made the little bird sing. Then Ned tried it. Even mother and grandmother wanted to make the bird sing.

The next morning when Jean and Ann were in their room talking about the party and all the presents Jean had received, grandmother came in to make their beds.

"Your toy canary reminds me of Peter Dink," she said.

"Who was he?" asked Jean.

"Peter Dink was a real canary my cousin Nellie brought to my sisters and me when she came to visit us. We put him in a cage and kept him at the Chickadee's Nest. Shall I tell you the story cousin Nellie told us about how he came to be so yellow?"

"Tell us right now," said Ann, climbing on the bed grandmother was making.

So grandmother forgot her work and this is the story she told:

"Once upon a time there lived a canary who was a gray little bird. So were all his brothers and sisters. One morning he sat upon a limb of a cherry tree and watched some other birds hopping about. He was feeling very sad—as somber as his feathers.

"Look at the beautiful bluebird, the cheery robin and the handsome oriole. They have such lovely colored feathers. Even that black-bird has red-tipped wings. The bluejay, the hummingbird and the red-headed woodpecker—ever so many birds have bright feathers. I want some, too.'



"The little gray bird thought and thought. Then he flew into the woods where some wild strawberries grew. He tried to color his feathers with them, they were so very red, but found they did not even stain his breast when he fluttered among them.

"He flew into a willow tree and in his disappointment began to think he might never find a way to change his color. And oh, how much he did want a bright coat! While he was wondering if Jack Frost would help him when he was painting the trees in the autumn, a ray of brilliant yellow sunshine shone down on him. 'My,' he thought, 'if I could only be as golden-yellow as the sun! What a beautiful bird I should be! I know what I shall do. I'll fly to the sun and see if I can get some yellow feathers there.'

"Before the sun had risen the next morning, the gray canary started flying. He flew swiftly toward the sun. On he went all that day, and the next day, and the day after that,—on and on for twenty days. As you may guess, the little bird was growing very tired. He was so happy, then, to find he had reached the sun. He lighted on a branch of a tree and rested. When he looked about, he was surprised to find that everything about him was a golden yellow. All was so bright and shining that the little bird blinked his eyes. He hopped about and tasted some of the yellow fruit on the trees and found it very good. While he was eating, a large yellow parrot flew over near him.

"'Who are you, and where did you come from?' asked the parrot.

"'I am a gray canary, and I came from the earth. I flew here to learn how to have yellow feathers like your own.'

"'I'm sure I don't know what you mean. If you would look at yourself, you would see that you have yellow feathers,' replied the parrot.

"The canary glanced down at himself and to his delight found that he *did* have yellow feathers.



Pauline K.

“ ‘Will my feathers stay yellow?’ he asked anxiously.

“ ‘I think so,’ said the parrot. ‘Everything on the sun is yellow and always stays so.’

“ ‘Oh, thank you!’ chirped the happy bird. ‘I shall fly back to earth and surprise everyone.’

“After resting a while, he sang out ‘Good-bye!’ and on the fortieth day after he had left the earth, he was back again.

“ ‘You can’t be our brother,’ said the other canaries as he greeted them. ‘We are gray and you are a golden yellow.’

“Then he told them of his adventure, and all of them admired his new golden coat so much that they decided that they, too, would fly to the sun. They did, and since that journey all canaries have worn yellow.”

# Uninvited Guests

YES indeed," said grandmother, in answer to Ann's question, "we often gave doll parties in Chickadee's Nest. We would dress our dolls in their very best clothes and have them play games and eat cake and drink tea. I remember one particular party which almost ended with an accident and many tears. We had twenty-six dollies and two teddy bears nicely arranged on cushions on the rug."

"Tell me their names, please," said Ann, whose chief delight was in renaming her own dolls.

"Let me see," said grandmother slowly. "I can't remember them all but I owned a Japanese doll I called Cherry Blossom, a boy doll named Donald and a baby doll called Bubbles. Most of all I loved a small china doll called Gwendolyn. She was only three inches tall. There were Tabitha, Patricia, Elizabeth, Helen, Louise, colored Miranda, a soldier doll Lieutenant Hamilton Smithers, and another boy doll we called Boy Blue, but which doll belonged to which girl I can't say.

"First of all we introduced each doll to all the others, and after that they began to play. The first game was *Steps*. The leader says to one player, 'You may take six giant steps,' or any other number or kind she wishes to call. The player answers, 'May I?' If the leader replies, 'You may,' the right number of steps is taken. But if the player forgets to say 'May I?' and takes the steps, back the player must go to the beginning line. The one who gets to the finishing line first is winner and becomes leader for the next game."

"We play that game too," said Jean, "only we call it *May I*."

"Then you know what a time we had playing it with twenty-six dolls," said grandmother. "We played it just twice before we decided it was time to serve the refreshments. The twins' mother had given





Frederick Schickel

us a small jar of cookies and mother had let us have a pitcher of milk and some sandwiches.

"Martha and Harriet being the oldest poured the milk into the cups of our set of doll dishes and served the dollies. The rest of us passed the sandwiches and the cookies. Of course, we pretended the dolls ate, and really enjoyed the food ourselves. We were just getting ready to eat it when Jimmy Todd, a neighbor boy, and the twins' brother Tom came bursting in on us.

"I suppose Tom had seen his mother give the cookies to Mary and Martha because he asked us for some the very first thing. We gave them each one, and then, when they asked, a sandwich too. By the time they had finished their sandwiches, Tom had seen the soldier doll, Lieutenant Hamilton Smithers, and my boy doll Donald.

" 'Let's have a boxing match with these two, Jimmy,' Tom suggested.

" 'But you might break them,' objected Mary.

" 'No, we won't. We'll play with them just like you do,' they promised.

"So we girls sat down to watch. Jimmy chose the Lieutenant and Tom took Donald. Each held his doll and by moving the arms made the dolls hit each other. The two boys shouted and crawled around the room on their knees, keeping the dolls jumping about until we became excited, too. Soon we were cheering the dolls and urging the boys to make them fight harder.

"Being encouraged, Jimmy took the Lieutenant by one arm and swung him at Donald. There was a cracking sound and Lieutenant Hamilton Smithers' left leg rolled into one corner of the room. A chip from Donald's china head fell on the rug.

"Mary ran to Jimmy and grabbed her soldier doll, while I rescued Donald from Tom. Our excitement over, the fight turned to tears for

the girls, and neither Jimmy's apologies nor Tom's promises of candy cheered us.

"Father had heard our shouting and wondered what caused so much cheering and now walked in to find Mary and me crying and holding our broken dolls.

" 'What's this? What has happened here?' he asked.

"All of us began to talk at once. Unable to understand any of us, father asked Jimmy to explain. He did so, and when he had told the story, father inspected the dolls.

" 'Well, if I were you two young ladies, I'd busy myself nursing the wounded instead of crying over them,' said my wise father. 'I'd bandage this young fellow's head,' pointing to my doll Donald, 'and put the soldier to bed until we can make a wooden leg for him. He will be a hero with a wooden leg,' he said, with a smile for Mary and for me.

"So Mary put her soldier doll to bed while I tore a piece of muslin into narrow strips for a bandage for Donald's poor head. Jimmy was forgiven when he went in search of a piece of soft wood from which to whittle a leg for the Lieutenant. Tom pretended he was the doctor come to call on the injured, and all of us played together until it was supper time and we had quite forgotten there had been any cause for tears at the party for the twenty-six dolls."



# Supper in the Playhouse

PICKING up the sweater she was knitting for Ned, grandmother told Jean and Ann a story while her needles clicked.

"On very special occasions, we five girls were allowed to eat our suppers in Chickadee's Nest. That meant buying the food we needed, preparing and cooking what we bought, as well as eating it.

"We were given seventy-five cents, fifteen cents for each girl, to buy the food, and took turns going to market.

"One day when it was Mary's turn to do the buying, she put the money in her pocketbook and hurried down to the grocery. She walked about the store trying to decide what to buy, for she never made out a list like the rest of us did.

"First she bought some eggs, because they were so white, and then some carrots because they were so yellow. Mr. Bender gave her a few grapes to taste, so she bought a bunch of them. Spying some lovely tulips on the counter, she decided the table would look well if a small pot of flowers stood in the center, and added them to her purchases.

"When Mr. Bender saw what Mary was buying, he smiled. Mother had told him we were learning to keep house and to sell us whatever we asked for. 'What else do you want for your supper, Miss Mary?' he asked.

" 'I guess I'll have a pound of rice,' she answered. 'And a half pound of sugar. Now how much money have I spent?'

"Mr. Bender counted up the items and replied, 'Exactly seventy-one cents. Do you have seventy-five cents to spend today?'

" 'Yes. But that leaves only four cents, and I need some potatoes.'

" 'I think I can give you enough potatoes for your supper for those four pennies,' remarked kind Mr. Bender.

“ ‘Thank you, sir,’ said Mary, quite pleased with her shopping.

“She hurried back to Chickadee’s Nest where we were waiting to see what we were going to have to eat that evening. When everything was unpacked, Harriet asked, ‘What did you plan to have for supper, Mary?’

“ ‘Fried eggs, baked potatoes, fresh bread mother is giving us, carrots, and a rice pudding for dessert. And your mother said she would give us a pitcher of milk, didn’t she?’”

“ ‘Yes, but Carey doesn’t eat rice.’

“ ‘And you know I don’t like carrots very well,’ Martha added.

“ ‘I’d rather have soft-boiled eggs than fried ones,’ Jane said.

“A tear trickled down Mary’s cheek, and thoughtful Harriet put her arm around her. ‘Never mind, Mary,’ she said. ‘Martha can eat Carey’s share of the dessert, and Carey can have Martha’s portion of carrots. We can boil some eggs, too. Come on, let’s put the rice to soak.’

“ ‘How much rice shall we use?’ Mary asked, putting some water in a pan.

“ ‘All of it,’ replied Jane. ‘That doesn’t look like enough even for me.’

“ ‘It swells a little, but I can’t say how much,’ warned Harriet.

“ ‘I think we ought to use only half of it,’ Martha said.

“ ‘Well, maybe half, but not more than that,’ Harriet agreed.

“Mary poured in half a pound, hesitated, then poured in a little more. ‘It just doesn’t look like enough,’ she said as she set the pan up on a shelf to soak.

“We returned to our playhouse in the mid-afternoon to set our table and prepare the food. Harriet built a fire in the stove, and put the rice on. While waiting for supper, we played on the porch with our dolls. Suddenly Jane said, ‘I smell something burning!’



“‘The rice!’ cried Martha, as we all scrambled into the kitchen.

“‘It *was* the rice. And oh, what a sight! The pan was running over; the top of the stove was covered with it; it was trickling down on to the floor.

“‘What shall we do? What shall we do?’ I shouted, hopping up and down in excitement.

“‘Here, take these bowls and pans, and scoop it up,’ said Martha.

“The five of us worked with a will until we heard a footstep on the porch, and there stood mother with our pail of milk.

“‘Oh, mother, look! The rice boiled all over!’ I exclaimed.

“Mother *was* looking, and there was a twinkle in her eyes that said as plain as words she understood just how it happened. ‘Perhaps you put on too much rice,’ she said.

“‘It didn’t look like very much,’ Mary said. ‘We used only half a pound.’

“Mother nodded her head, smiled and said, ‘It was a bit too much. A half cup would have been enough. Rice swells so. But never mind. Since you have so much cooked, you may give me some for our supper.’

“‘I don’t believe we will ever learn to cook like you and mother,’ Martha sighed, still wiping up the rice.

“‘Indeed you girls will all be good cooks—better than your mothers, I suspect. I must hurry home now to pare my potatoes.’

“‘That reminds me,’ said Harriet, ‘we have to put our potatoes in the oven right away.’

“And when we five girls sat down to supper, we found it very easy to eat everything on the table except the silver and the dishes and the lovely pot of tulips.”



# Early Morning in the Garden

COME, Ann," urged grandmother, "eat your vegetables like the good little girl you are."

"But, grandmother, I am so tired of vegetables!" said Ann, looking down on the carrot she was slowly nibbling with a frown.

"Then that is because you don't know what interesting things all vegetables are. Eat your lunch now, and this afternoon while you are in the kitchen with me helping to get the vegetables ready for our dinner, I will tell you a story about them."

That promise was all the little girl needed to make her forget her objections, and soon her plate was empty. When she had finished the meal, she looked up at grandmother with a smile and said, "Grandmother, don't you think we might do our work right now? It won't spoil the vegetables we're going to have for dinner if we get them ready right now, will it? And then I'll hear that story much sooner. Do let us!"

"I think that a very good suggestion," replied grandmother, and she went to the refrigerator and then to the cellar and brought out the different vegetables for that day's dinner. She put them on the kitchen table, drew up a high stool, lifted Ann up on it, and soon the little girl was busy scrubbing them.

"The brown squirrel heard this story from the rabbit," began her grandmother quietly, "and the squirrel told it to a little bird, and the little bird told it to me.

"Mr. Rabbit lived in the meadow, but often went to Farmer Brown's garden for good things that grew there. Early one morning when he was sitting in the lettuce bed eating a crisp leaf of it, he heard a faint sound of a horn. At first he was very much frightened, because he knew this usually meant dogs and hunters were chasing a fox or a rabbit. As



From Bird's Nest

the horn sounded again and nearer, Mr. Rabbit turned around, and what do you think he saw?

“Coming down between the garden rows were four string beans, very straight and very tall. They carried trumpets, which they blew lustily now and then as they marched. Behind them came a whole troop of carrot soldiers with waving plumes. Then came the king of the Vegetable Kingdom. He was a jolly looking fellow, so Mr. Rabbit said. His body was a cabbage, his head was a potato, and his arms and legs were made of celery stalks. For a crown he wore half a red pepper, with a carrot plume waving above it.

“The vegetables following him shouted, ‘Long live the king!’

“The king halted in front of a large clod of dirt, on which he seated himself, and his trumpeters and soldiers gathered about.

“The string beans sounded a few notes on their trumpets, and the carrot soldiers and all the company joined in the song:

Our king is mighty and he's brave;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!  
Small boys and girls he's going to save;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!

Each vegetable his part will do,  
We'll gladly boil, and fry, and stew,  
Walk down children's mouths two by two;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!

We'll make them wise beyond their years;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!  
We'll make them wipe away their tears,  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!



There will be fun, there will be joy,  
Each lad will be a healthy boy,  
No aches or ills the girls annoy;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle ta raddle!

Eat some carrots and tomatoes;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!  
With plenty of cabbage, beans and potatoes;  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!

Eat corn on the cob and vegetable stew,  
Eat turnips and lettuce and parsley, too;  
Eat plenty, eat plenty, oh yes, please do!  
Ta raddle, ta raddle, ta raddle!

“ ‘Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!’ shouted the vegetables, clapping their hands and capering about.

“ ‘Now back to your places, every one of you!’ commanded the king. ‘Farmer Brown will soon be out of bed and this is the day he gathers some of us and takes us in to market. He must not find us out of our rows.’

“ ‘Hurrah!’ they cheered again.

“ ‘Back to your places double quick!’ shouted one of the carrot soldiers who was doing guard duty. ‘Jimmy Brown is coming now.’

“Before you could wink an eye, the carrots were in their rows, all the other vegetables back in their proper places, and the king had hurried away, and when Farmer Brown’s son walked down the garden row, all he saw was a little rabbit nibbling a lettuce leaf and the carrot tops waving in the morning breeze.”

# A Neighborhood Exhibit

ANN sat with her elbows on her knees and her face in her hands, watching her grandmother shell new peas. "Dear me, I wish there was something for a little girl to do," she sighed.

"I often thought the same thing when I was a child," said grandmother, "and so did my sisters. One day we were complaining because dolls were stupid and Brother Ned didn't want to play with us, and the twins next door were away, when mother came over to the porch steps where we sat. She had several plants in a basket, two trowels, and a watering pot.

" 'Here is something new for you to do,' said she. 'Take these petunia plants to the flower bed I have just made behind the shed, and plant them where I have driven in little sticks. When you have done that, pull the weeds I notice have grown over in my big flower bed.'

"We took her basket, trowels and watering pot, and went to work. I dug the little holes as mother had said, Jane poured in some water, and Harriet set the plants. That part of the work was nice, but pulling and digging weeds wasn't nearly so much fun. For a while we raced, to see which one could get the largest pile of weeds. But soon all the big weeds had been pulled, and the little ones didn't make our piles grow fast enough to interest us. Then we decided to see who could pull the most. We soon got tired and sat down to count the weeds while we rested, and it was then that a ladybug crawled over the edge of a leaf and fell into Jane's lap.

" 'Oh, here's a pretty little ladybug!' she exclaimed.

" 'Let's put it in a jar,' I suggested.

" 'And start a collection,' added Harriet, who liked to collect all kinds of things.

“ ‘We could put different kinds of bugs in separate jars and have a show, couldn’t we?’ said Jane.

“With that idea in our minds we forgot all about pulling more weeds, and ran to the fruit cellar to get some empty jars mother stored there. Then began a search of our garden for bugs. We soon decided to catch some butterflies too, and ran about chasing them until we were very hot and weary.

“When we looked over our collection, we found we had:

5 potato bugs  
2 ladybugs  
3 butterflies  
1 measuring worm  
6 ants  
2 beetles  
3 grasshoppers  
2 crickets

“ ‘That will be enough, I think,’ Harriet decided. ‘Now we ought to get some tumblers and make cages for each of them.’

“ ‘We ought to name them and make labels for each cage,’ Jane said.

“We carried our collection down to the Chickadee’s Nest, and Harriet stirred up some flour-and-water paste, while Jane and I cut and wrote the labels. We separated our bugs and butterflies, putting each one in a jar, covering the jar, and labelling it.

“ ‘We ought to tell the twins, and the boys, and the Warners,’ I suggested, after we had placed the jars around the edge of our table so each could be seen to advantage.

“ ‘And the Johnsons,’ added Jane. ‘What’s the good of a show if no one comes to see it?’

“Jane went up our street, and I went down it, and Harriet, being



the oldest, took the cross street as far as we knew the people on it. By the time we got home, the first visitors began to arrive, and soon Chickadee's Nest was filled with boys and girls looking at our exhibit and comparing the bugs and butterflies with those they had seen. The boys laughed and called it a 'girls' show,' but Tom came back later when we were alone and brought two lovely big butterflies and a bottle of pollywogs, which he gave to us.

"For two days we had visitors most of the time, and many of them brought moths and butterflies and funny looking bugs and beetles. Then interest began to lag and when Ned and Tom offered to buy our collection for six cents, we sold it to them.

" 'What did they do with it?' inquired Ann.

"They mounted all the butterflies and the moths, and used the crickets and grasshoppers as bait when they went fishing one day. We girls were glad we had sold to them when they brought back a fish they had caught, and Harriet fried it on our stove and it made a very nice supper for us."

# A Night in Chickadee's Nest

GRANDMOTHER picked a stocking out of the mending basket and ran her hand carefully down to the toe, looked at her two granddaughters sitting on low stools beside her as they helped with the mending, and then began:

"We three sisters had been playing in the Chickadee's Nest all day long and had been having such a good time that we did not want to go home.

" 'How I wish we might stay here all night,' said Jane.

" 'I'll go ask mother!' I volunteered, for the plan pleased me. And so I ran up to the house and asked if Harriet, Jane and I could sleep out in our playhouse. Mother thought we would be safe and readily gave her permission.

"When we went in for dinner with father and mother, blankets, sheets and pillows were ready for us, and dinner was hardly over before we took the covers and a lamp and went back to Chickadee's Nest.

"Harriet made her bed alone, while I helped Jane with the one for us. Soon it was dark enough to light the lamp, and then Mary and Martha came over to call on us. We sat out on the porch and told stories until the twins' mother called them to come home. Then we went inside and undressed our dolls. By the time we had put the last doll in bed, we were sleepy ourselves and went to bed.

"I don't know how long we had been sleeping when I was wakened by a tapping on our porch. It sounded like someone tapping on the wall. Then I became frightened because I thought I heard someone walking.

"I poked Jane until she wakened and whispered to her, 'Somebody is trying to get in!'







"Jane listened a moment and then said sleepily, 'It's nothing but a branch of a tree or bush rubbing against the house. The wind is blowing a little. Go back to sleep!'

"Listening again, I realized she was right, and so I curled up close to her and went to sleep.

"The next thing I heard was Jane calling quietly, 'Harriet, Harriet, wake up! Somebody is outside. I can hear him.'

"Instantly we were all awake and listening intently. Sure enough, we heard someone walk a few steps and then stop. A moment later he took a few steps more.

" 'I'll go look out the window,' whispered Harriet.

"She slipped out of bed ever so quietly, tiptoed to the window and peeked out. She gave a little giggle, turned and said, 'Janey, come look!'

"Jane ran to her, and I did too. There by the mulberry tree was our Jersey cow Nancy, grazing by moonlight.

"We went back to our beds laughing about our visitor and after talking a little bit, fell fast asleep. I was awakened next morning by a kiss on each eyelid, and there stood mother.

" 'Such sleepyheads!' she teased. 'I might have walked away with all your dolls and you would never have heard me.'

Harriet set the table for breakfast and poured the fresh milk mother had brought to us. When we had washed the dishes and put them away, I asked, 'Who is going to roll up our bedding and take it to the house?'

" 'I got the breakfast, so I think Jane ought to do that,' said Harriet.

" 'But I helped with the dishes, so I ought not to do all that work alone. Carey could do it if she were only older,' and she sighed as she looked at me.

" 'We'll all help as we did last night when we made them,' decided

Harriet wisely. 'Let's race, and then we'll go over to see Mary and Martha. You two are against me,' for Harriet always liked to make games and races out of all the work she did, so it went faster.

"Of course Jane and I beat her carrying our covers back to the house, but when she came along, we all went next door to tell our friends about our night caller. Their mother came in to listen to our story, and as we finished, she remarked, 'That's the way with most of the things that frighten folks—when we know what they really are, we find there is nothing to fear.' "











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